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**STATE MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT SECURES FEDERAL FUNDS FOR
VICTIMS OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES**

Nearly \$4 Million to Go to Crisis Counseling and Mental Health Services

SACRAMENTO – State Mental Health Director Dr. Stephen Mayberg today announced that California will receive nearly \$4 million in federal funds for crisis counseling and disaster mental health services for victims of the 2003 Southern California wildfires. The funding is authorized by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Crisis Counseling Assistance and Training Program.

“The emotional devastation in dealing with the Southern California wildfires is every bit as real as the property destruction,” said Mayberg. “These funds will allow mental health departments in Los Angeles, San Bernardino and San Diego counties to continue providing crisis counseling services to victims of the disaster.”

The California Department of Mental Health (DMH) submitted a request for funds on behalf of local mental health departments via the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services. The funding allocations include \$1,976,149 for San Bernardino County, \$1,455,040 for San Diego County and \$312,344 for the Tri-City area of Los Angeles County. The remaining \$87,096 will cover administrative costs for DMH.

Services available under the FEMA Crisis Counseling Assistance and Training Program may include crisis counseling, outreach to affected communities, education and information sharing and screening and referral to longer term, more formal mental health treatment or other disaster service agencies.

After a presidential disaster area declaration, funding is available from FEMA to provide disaster mental health services to affected counties. Services are available to the entire disaster-affected population. Funds are allocated through two grant programs: the Immediate Services Program (ISP) is available for up to 60 days; and the Regular Services Program (RSP) follows the ISP and is available for up to nine months following a disaster if extended services are warranted. Both programs can be extended.

Since October 26, 2003, local agencies have been providing disaster mental health services under an ISP grant. Funding announced today will provide continuity of services under the RSP from March 24, 2004, through December 24, 2004.

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